UNIVERSITY OF Southampton
School of Health Sciences

Liberating the career potential of a graduate nurse workforce :

Re-engineering pre-registration education

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THE NEXT STAGE REVIEW (DARZI) BUILDS ON NHS PLAN, NMC AND MNC AND ADVOCATES A TRANSFORMED HEALTH SERVICE OFFERING EFFECTIVE, HIGH QUALITY, PATIENT-CENTERED CARE FOR ALL. DARZI ACKNOWLEDGES:

- the need to address workforce issues and roles
- the need for all healthcare professionals to act as partners and leaders in care
- the need for an all-graduate registered nurse workforce
- the need for strong clinical career pathways to optimise the nursing contribution to health care

MODERNISING NURSING CAREERS LED BY CNO ENGLAND FOCUSES ON:

- preparing well-qualified graduate nurses to provide clinical leadership in a changing healthcare system and to be the mainstay of key services including first point of contact, urgent access and triage and management of long-term conditions. Priorities are:
- reviewing pre-registration education and resetting standards (NMC)
- developing robust clinical career pathways
- articulating clear levels of practice beyond registration

THE CASE FOR RE-ENGINEERING PRE-REGISTRATION EDUCATION

Nursing is as intellectually demanding as it is physically and emotionally demanding. Its complexity is at least as great as that of medicine.

The core of its practice is not the manual skills associated with technical procedures which are comparatively easy to teach and learn but the cognitive skills and emotional intelligence associated with:

- holistic assessment
- clinical decision making
- compassionate care management
- therapeutic intervention

FUTURE REGISTERED NURSE RESPONSIBILITIES

- high quality nursing care and delivery on metrics
- first line clinical assessments and decisions
- case management and care pathway co-ordination
- evidence-based nursing interventions
- prescribing medicines and treatments and requesting diagnostic tests
- referral to other professionals
- admission and discharge decisions
- care/team leadership

N.B. Pre-registration preparation MUST be re-engineered to reflect these responsibilities

RE-ENGINEERING PRE-REGISTRATION NURSING EDUCATION REQUIRES RADICAL OVERHAUL OF:

- NMC standards of proficiency and skills clusters
- curriculum structure
- curriculum focus and content
- routes to graduateness
- funding streams and commissioning patterns

RE-ENGINEERING NMC STANDARDS OF PROFICIENCY

Current mismatch between standards and future nursing role and responsibility parameters – to be addressed by NMC Review

- language and wording of current standards diluted and not challenging enough (e.g. tomorrow's doctors)
- concept of skills clusters needs to be reviewed and upgraded to inform curriculum content (c.f. tomorrow's doctors)
- new standards must reflect the underpinning graduate knowledge, skills and competencies required at registration and must equip graduates for a continuing clinical career trajectory

RE-ENGINEERING THE PRINCIPLES OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM

- knowledge and skills to support proactive accountable practice
- preparation for post-registration advanced clinical development in specialty/domain
- greater use of simulation
- fewer, more intensive, high quality practice placements
- placements in community and acute settings

RE-ENGINEERING THE STRUCTURE OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM

- move away from CFP – Branch concept
- develop cohesive and challenging core curriculum (2 yrs) which reflects knowledge and skills required for the key domains of nursing practice (e.g. long term conditions, end of life care, urgent access, acute/high tech care etc)
- make second order linkage with Darzi pathways and EC directives
- provide field and domain focus opportunities and choices (majors) in final year to reflect post-registration career pathway plans

RE-ENGINEERING THE FOCUS OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM (1)

Future graduate programmes must equip students to PROACTIVELY:

- deliver accountable care in community and acute settings
- demonstrate accountability
- provide leadership in care across key domains e.g.
  - long term conditions
  - acute and hitech care
  - end of life care
  - first point of contact and urgent access
  - public and family health

RE-ENGINEERING THE FOCUS OF THE PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM (2)

Equipping students for key nursing accountabilities which include:

- clinical assessment
- clinical decision making
- evidence-based, high quality interventions and treatments in key nursing care areas linked to metrics e.g. skin health, continence, nutrition, mobility
- triage and referral
- prescribing
- supervising team members including lay carers
- exploiting new technologies

N.B. These should be linked to fields, domains and settings

RE-ENGINEERING THE PRE-REGISTRATION CURRICULUM CONTENT

Equipping students with a sound knowledge and skills base including:

- anatomy and physiology
- pharmacology
- psycho-social influences on health & illness
- research utilisation
- explicit higher order clinical skills e.g. prescribing, cannulation
- communication and team work
- negotiation and advocacy
- new technologies

N.B. New standards for proficiency and curriculum must reflect the above

RE-ENGINEERING THE PRE-REGISTRATION ROUTES TO GRADUATENESS

Route	Length in Years	Descriptor	Entry Qualifications	Exit Qualifications	
A	3 yrs	Standard Track (Field specific)	AS levels equivalent	BSc/RN	with field/domain focus
B	2 + 2 yrs 1 + 3 yrs	Widened Access Track (Field specific)	Current minimum entry levels	BSc/RN	with field/domain focus
C	2 + 2 yrs	Flexible step-on / step-off routes)	as for Foundation Degrees	FD asst. nurse (2 yrs) BSc/RN (4 yrs)	generic

N.B. Potential for future fast-track routes to advanced practice with initial foundation core curriculum across professions.

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RE-ENGINEERING FUNDING STREAMS AND COMMISSIONING PATTERNS

- establish mechanisms to fund all routes and tracks leading to BSc/RN, and FD
- provide consistent student support and bursary arrangements for all routes
- ensure placement support monies follow students
- ensure funding for field and domain specific post-registration career training posts

Liberating the Career Potential

- Nursing must attract the best quality recruits in an increasingly competitive labour market. *(Darzi 2008)*

- Re-badging nursing as an all-graduate profession will tap into a larger, diverse recruitment pool of individuals wishing to combine a degree with a meaningful, challenging and fulfilling career in healthcare.

- Re-engineering pre-registration standards, curriculum and funding mechanisms will result in a fit for purpose workforce prepared for and with an expectation of career progression which will result in decreased attrition from the profession.